

# Rare Animals of Louisiana



## Osprey

*Pandion haliaetus*

**Rarity Rank:** S2B,S3N/G5

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure



Photo by Bill Ford

### Identification:

- Large raptor with long, relatively narrow, rounded wings
- Head mostly white with dark line through the eye and a dark, mottled nape
- Upperparts are dark brownish-black and under parts white
- In flight, distinct patches at wrist, black wingtips and distinct crook in wings at wrist can be seen
- Length of adults can be up to 25 in with a wingspread of 72 in

### Habitat:

- Habitat varies but common elements include an adequate supply of shallow water prey, open nesting areas without predators, and an ice free season long enough to allow fledging of the young
- Use of artificial sites such as telephone poles for nesting has increased recently

### Food habits:

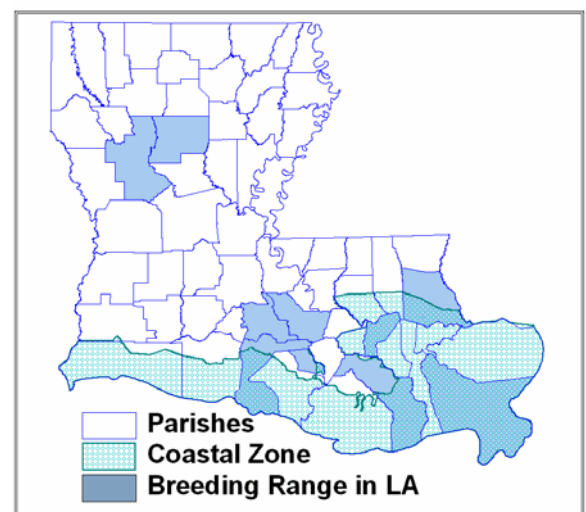
Dive for prey feet first, and therefore feed on surface-schooling fish

### Range:

- Breeding Range: Nests throughout southern Canada and Alaska, the western United States, the Gulf of Mexico and U.S. Atlantic coast, south along both coasts to Belize; also Old World
- Winters in southern parts of its breeding range and South America
- In Louisiana, winters along the coast and on larger inland lakes

### Reproduction:

- Two to four eggs laid per clutch from January through April
- Both sexes incubate, which lasts 28 to 43 days. Young fledge at seven to eight weeks
- Nests are built using large sticks and grasses, are often reused several years and can weigh up to one half ton
- Eggs are creamy white to pinkish cinnamon and are heavily dotted in reddish brown



Range based on occurrences in Natural Heritage database

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## Threats:

- In the past, chemical pollution such as DDT caused eggshell thinning
- When nesting around highways, are vulnerable to collisions with vehicles
- Loss of nest sites due to agricultural development and logging

## Beneficial Management Practices:

- Improvement of food supplies through fisheries management
- Providing artificial nest sites has been successful in the past

## LA River Basins:

Pearl, Pontchartrain, Mississippi, Barataria, Terrebonne, Atchafalaya, Vermilion-Teche, Red, Ouachita



Photo by Larry Korhnak

## References:

Poole, A. F., R. O. Bierregaard, and M. S. Martell. 2002. Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 683 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.

NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.2. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: August 9, 2007 ).

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For more information, please visit our Web pages at

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